



***United States Attorney
Southern District of New York***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 26, 2003**

**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
MARVIN SMILON, HERBERT HADAD
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600**

**U.S. WINS EXTRADITION TO NEW YORK OF MAJOR ALLEGED
COLOMBIAN DRUG LORD AND TWO KEY ACCOMPLICES**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York announced that JOSE JAIRO GARCIA-GIRALDO, a/k/a "Jota," reputed to be a notorious Colombian drug lord, and two of his key top lieutenants - FABIO GARCIA-GIRALDO, a/k/a "Fabian," and JUAN CARLOS GIRALDO-PEREZ, a/k/a "Juancho" - have been extradited from the Republic of Colombia to the United States.

The dismantling of the GARCIA-GIRALDO Organization - alleged to be responsible for importing at least 10 to 20 kilograms of heroin a month into the United States - is the result of a year-long cooperative investigation conducted by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("BICE") within the Department of Homeland Security, the Colombian National Police ("CNP"), and the Colombian Prosecutor General's Office (the

Fiscalia General de la Nacion), and coordinated by the United States Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force in New York.

This joint investigation has resulted in the arrest of more than 40 alleged members of the Organization's heroin trafficking network in the United States and Colombia, including the arrest of 21 targets by the CNP in and around Pereira and the arrest of 7 targets by the DEA and the Customs Service in and around New York City and Philadelphia.

The Indictment charges the alleged leader of the Organization, JOSE JAIRO GARCIA-GIRALDO, and two of his Colombian-based lieutenants - FABIO GARCIA-GIRALDO, a/k/a "Fabian," and JUAN CARLOS GIRALDO-PEREZ, a/k/a "Juancho," - with conspiring, between October 2001 and June 2002, to import the kilograms of heroin into the United States.

On February 4, March 4, and March 25, 2003, the Colombian Supreme Court issued a ruling in favor of the extraditions of JUAN CARLOS GIRALDO-PEREZ, FABIO GARCIA-GIRALDO, and JOSE JAIRO GARCIA-GIRALDO, respectively. On February 26, March 19, and April 8, 2003, the Colombian President Alvaro Uribe and his Minister of Justice approved the extraditions of JUAN CARLOS GIRALDO-PEREZ, FABIO GARCIA-GIRALDO and JOSE JAIRO GARCIA-GIRALDO, respectively. These measures follow the official request for the extradition of JUAN CARLOS GIRALDO-PEREZ, FABIO GARCIA-GIRALDO, and JOSE JAIRO GARCIA-GIRALDO issued by the

United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York in June 2002.

The Indictment alleges that JOSE JAIRO GARCIA-GIRALDO was the leader of this large-scale international heroin smuggling organization that was responsible for importing approximately 10 to 20 kilograms of heroin per month, with a monthly street value in excess of \$1.5 million to \$3 million, into the United States.

The Indictment further alleges that the Organization controlled every phase of the path from packaging the refined heroin in Colombia to offering it for sale on American streets. The Indictment alleges that the refined heroin purchased by the Organization in Pereira, Colombia, was packaged into forms suitable for smuggling at various packaging mills maintained by the Organization in the Medellin and Pereira areas. Among these was a packaging mill allegedly controlled by JUAN CARLOS GIRALDO-PEREZ in Medellin, Colombia. Within the mills, heroin was secreted in hidden compartments in luggage and soaked into clothing for transit to the United States.

The Indictment alleges that, in order to manage their smuggling operation, JOSE JAIRO GARCIA-GIRALDO and other members of the Organization then recruited couriers in Colombia and the United States to import shipments of heroin into the United States. According to the Indictment, these couriers smuggled

heroin using false compartments in luggage or by soaking the heroin into clothing. The Indictment alleges that these couriers transported the heroin via airliner from Colombia to various cities throughout the United States, including the New York metropolitan area.

In all, American and Colombian law enforcement have seized, among other things, approximately \$490,000 that is alleged to be the Organization's money in New York, approximately 15 kilograms of heroin from a mill controlled by JUAN CARLOS GIRALDO-PEREZ in Colombia, approximately 4 kilograms of heroin from a courier, Rivera, in Ecuador, and approximately 55 pounds of heroin soaked clothing from another courier in Houston, Texas.

Mr. Comey praised the efforts of the efforts of the DEA, the BICE and the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, comprised of special agents of the DEA, detectives of the New York City Police Department, special agents of the BICE, narcotics investigators of the New York State Police, and the DEA Bogota Country Office. He also expressed his appreciation to the authorities in the Republic of Colombia, and in particular the Colombian National Police and the Colombian Prosecutor General's Office (the Fiscalia General de la Nacion), for their invaluable assistance both in the investigation and extradition of the three defendants.

If convicted, JOSE JAIRO GARCIA-GIRALDO, FABIO GARCIA-GIRALDO, and JUAN CARLOS GIRALDO-PEREZ each face a maximum sentence of life in prison.

Assistant United States Attorneys MARK A. RACANELLI and DEIRDRE A. McEVOY are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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